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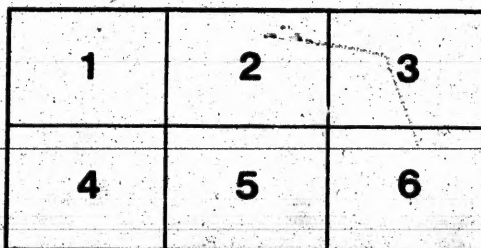
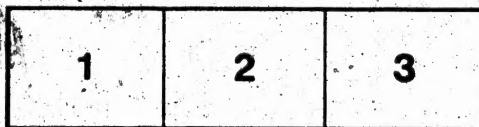
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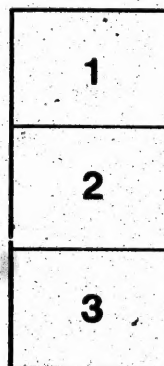
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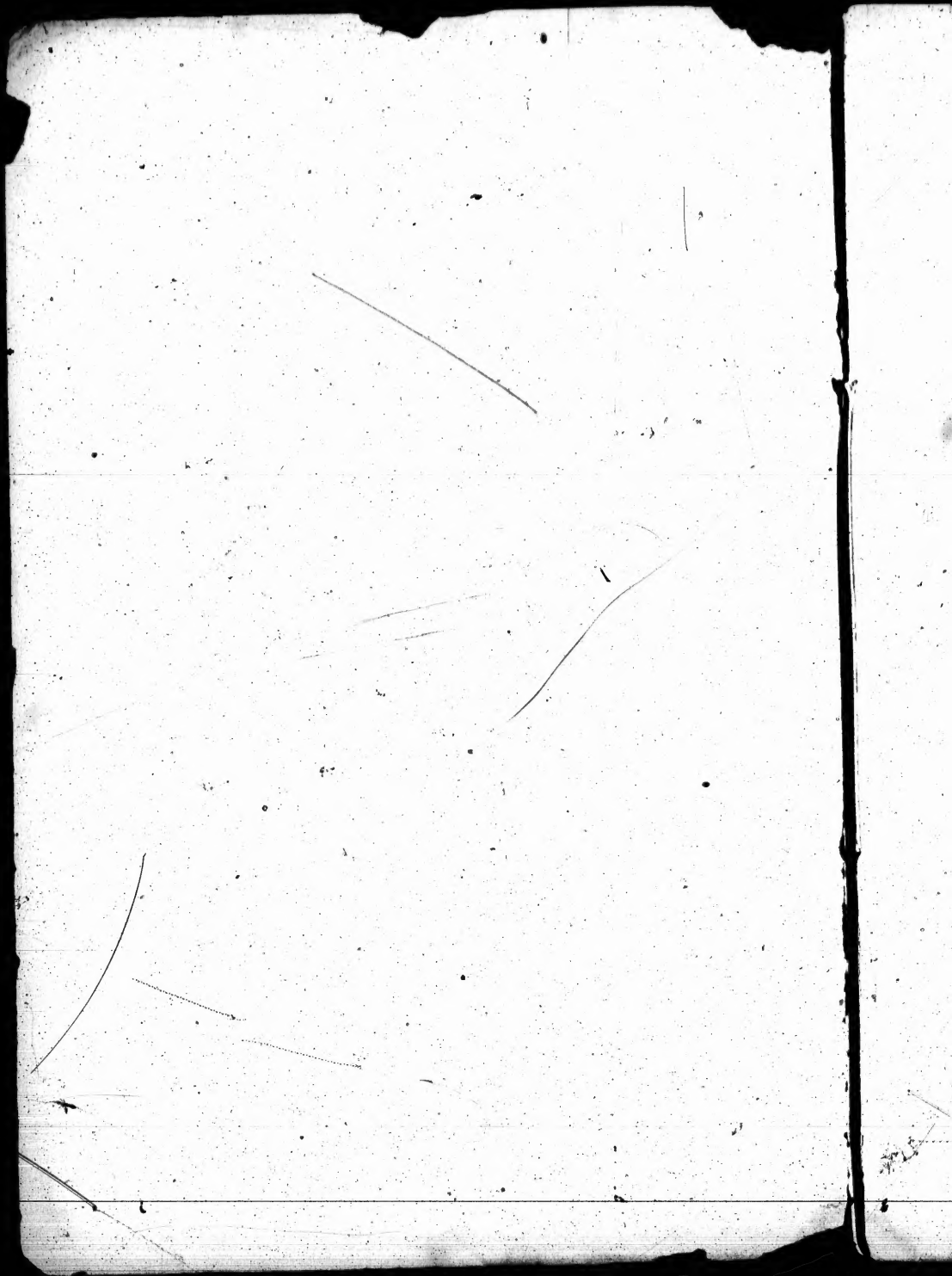
WESLEYAN METHODIST'S THOUGHTS

ABOUT

PRAYER, THE BIBLE, THE HOUSE OF GOD, BAPTISM,
THE LORD'S SUPPER, THE COVENANT, MY MINISTERS,
MY CLASS, HOME, MY MASTER, MY SERVANT,
MY COUNTRY, GIVING, SORROW,
SICKNESS, AND DEATH.

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A WESLEYAN METHODIST'S THOUGHTS.

PRAYER.—Everything serves to remind me that I am a most helpless creature. If God were to leave me to myself, no effort of mine could preserve to me my health, my senses, or my reason. Still less could I originate or maintain the life of holiness in my soul. There are a thousand spiritual enemies to grapple with ; the most subtle and severe temptations to resist ; duties to which my nature is sadly averse, to be constantly performed ; and “things not seen” to be looked at and loved. How can all this be done, without Divine aid ? But I know that God is willing to impart such aid to all who earnestly seek it. “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him.” It is on this account that I pray. Blind, I ask for heavenly light and guidance : weak, I ask to be strengthened by the Spirit’s might : I implore grace to subdue and sanctify my earthly heart.

Besides all this, I have committed iniquity. I have done wickedly. Time was when I did not believe this, but strove to hide it from myself. But now, God’s law, applied to my conscience by the Holy Spirit, has condemned me. I know and feel that I am guilty ; and if this guilt be not cancelled, I am for ever undone. But at the throne of grace, I may

obtain mercy. I plead there, in the name of Jesus, and trusting in His death for me, to be forgiven ; and then

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear."

Thus would I pray, encouraged by God's promises, and gratefully owning his past goodness. From no other source can I derive these great blessings. No created being can remove the load of guilt, renovate the heart, and bring to heaven. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." It is not to saints, or angels, or the Virgin Mother, that I would go. No: it is to God. Nor do I seek their intercession: "There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," I need, desire no other.

I wish to live in the spirit of prayer all the day long ; while some seasons shall be expressly set apart for communion with God. Good Philip Henry said, "Let prayer be the key of the morning, and the bolt of the evening." So shall my devotions ascend to God with the morning light ; and when the shades of night gather around, my last act shall be to commend my body and soul to God, the keeper of Israel. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud."

THE BIBLE.—If one of my children, when absent from home, were to allow a letter which I had addressed to him to lie unopened and neglected, I should deem him guilty of great disrespect and want of filial affection. Now my Father in heaven has sent me a message of instruction, counsel, and love. It is here in the Holy Scriptures, which

bear on every page the marks of their divinity. The Bible is God's letter to me. How wrong it were not to read it ; or to read it in any other than an humble, serious, and prayerful spirit ! And how foolish ! for in this book alone am I taught how to live and how to die. What mariner would cast away his chart, or his compass ! Yet this would not be conduct half so reckless and infatuated, as for me—an immortal, erring, sinful man—to neglect the Bible.

Then not a day shall pass without my reading some portion of this precious book. It is enlightening and life-giving. "The entrance of thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." I would not read it cursorily or carelessly. I would, as exhorted by the Saviour, *search* the Scriptures ; thinking out there blessed truths, and earnestly praying over them. It is only thus that I can perceive all their sacred beauty, and realize their saving efficacy. As many parts of the Bible are difficult and mysterious, I wish thankfully to avail myself of the helps furnished by conversation with experienced and intelligent Christians, and with my Pastors, and by reference to books written by learned and pious men. At the same time, I would carefully abstain from putting them in the place of the Bible. It must and shall stand foremost and unrivalled. I am well convinced that *it is* the revelation of God to man : but tradition, the teachings of the Church, the opinions of fallible men, have no such authority. I cannot think that when God wrote his will in the books of Scripture, He would do this in an unintelligible manner, or would leave it incomplete. I rest, then, in the supremacy and sufficiency of the written word of God. All in the Bible I am bound to be-

lieve and practise ; but nothing else is essential to salvation. "I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God : just hovering over the great gulf : till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen ; I drop into an unchangeable eternity ! I want to know one thing, —the way to heaven ; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way ; for this very end he came down from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book ! At any price, give me the book of God ! I have it : here is knowledge enough for me." *

THE HOUSE OF GOD.—How fervent was the attachment of God's ancient people to Jerusalem ! And in the case of the devout and right-minded among them, was it not because at Jerusalem was the temple,—the house of the Lord their God. It was "Zion, the city of their solemnities." No wonder that its name was the symbol of hallowing and elevated enjoyment : no wonder that it acted like a spell to call up the best feelings with which their hearts were stored. For similar reasons I love my place of worship, and gladly frequent it. There I join with the holy and good in publicly confessing God as our God, and the King over the whole earth ; in offering grateful homage before his throne, and supplicating his blessing ; and in listening to his word, as read and expounded by his commissioned servant. I find that God's gracious promise is still true : "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." O how oft have I been enlightened, quickened,

* Wesley.

comforted, and strengthened, while waiting within those sacred courts! How oft, while worshipping there with the church of the first-born, have I been blessed with the hope and the foretaste of the high happiness of that world of which "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple!"

And not only would I account it my privilege to attend with my family in the house of prayer, but my conscience tells me that it is my incumbent duty. Is not God to be publicly acknowledged in his own world? Is not the church to be as "a city set on a hill?" And how can it be, if each of its members confines himself to acts of private devotion! Are we not enjoined not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together? Has not Christ pronounced a special benediction on it? (Matt. xviii. 20.)

"Though private prayer be a brave design,
Yet public hath more promises, more love."

Have not the wise and good of every age delighted in the services of the sanctuary? And above all, did not my blessed Master set the example in this respect, by repairing often to the synagogue and the temple? And shall I set myself above Him, and neglect public worship on the plea that I can serve God as well in retired devotion, and by reading the Scripture, and good books, at home?

For reasons such as those, nothing but what is unavoidable, as sickness, bereavement, and the like, shall keep me from God's house. And I wish to be punctual as well as regular in my attendance there. I would not, by coming late, seem to wish to shorten as much as possible those heavenly exercises, or thus grieve my Minister and disturb

others. I would join in singing God's praises ; and in the prayers offered as the confession of sin and the entreaty for blessings on myself, the Church, and the world. I would listen to the lessons and the sermon as God's message to me. The Minister is God's ambassador. If he casts new light on truth and duty, I would thankfully welcome it, and treasure it up in my memory : remembering, at the same time, that it ought not to be my only or chief object in attending the house to "hear some new thing ;" but, as Judge Hale said, in reference to himself, "to be impressed and affected, and to have old and known truth reduced to experience and practice."

BAPTISM.—I regard baptism as the initiatory sacrament of the Christian Church ; and, because instituted by the Lord Jesus, the Head of that Church, of sacred and paramount obligation. Believing myself to be a member of the mystical body of Christ, I feel it to be my duty and privilege to bring my children to this holy ordinance. The covenant of which it is the sign and seal, embraces our seed. The promise of the Spirit—the crowning blessing of the covenant, and whose purifying influence baptism represents—is made, not only to us, but also to our children. (Isai. xlv. 2—5 ; Acts ii. 39.) Is it not therefore right to bring them to this sacrament ? Besides, I cannot forget how it was when God called Abraham to be the father of the Israelitish church. The patriarch believed God, "and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith." And it was commanded that his posterity should be circumcised in infancy. So also the first Christians believed, and were baptized ; and their children, and those of believers

since, were baptized in infancy. If it be said that there is no express authority for this, we reply that "this is the very circumstance which inclines us to walk in the footsteps of the former dispensation. Express authority is needed to warrant a change; but it is not needed to warrant a continuation." While, on the other hand, if the practice of infant baptism—the natural carrying out of principles which had been all along acted on in the Jewish Church—had been contrary to the will of God, the Apostles would have forbidden it.

I rejoice therefore in the opportunity of bringing my offspring to this blessed sacrament, and thus dedicating them to God, and claiming for them his blessing. I would remember that in so doing, I solemnly engage to train them for him, to employ all my influence and authority to induce them to become his servants, to instruct them in his will, and unweariedly to pray for them. It is to me a visible pledge that God will ever be mindful of his covenant, and that He will pour his Spirit on my seed and his blessing on my offspring: and it is also a pledge on my part that I will be most sedulous and faithful in the discharge of all parental duties, considering my children as not so much mine, for my comfort or honour, as *the Lord's*,—his sealed, blood-bought servants. Nor can I doubt, that bringing them thus to his altar, and exercising faith in his promises, the service of that holy hour shall leave behind it a blessing on me and them. This blessing, in their case, must come short of being fully renewed in the spirit of their mind; yet I cannot think that when Christ's own ordinance is believingly observed, it will be a mere meaningless ceremony, barren, and bereft of all spiritual influence.

If present on other occasions when this sacrament is administered, it shall not be as an unconcerned and uninterested spectator. Let me join with the Minister and the congregation of God's people in the prayers which are offered. A special promise is made to united prayer; and I deem myself happy in being permitted to join in intercession on behalf of my friends and neighbours, that the Lord Jehovah will be a God to them and to their seed after them.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.—As I trust that I forsake all sin, endeavour to live according to God's holy word, and look for eternal life only through the merits of Christ, I would gladly and reverently accept every invitation to "draw nigh and take this holy sacrament to my comfort." If my conscience tells me that this is not the case, but that I am really unfit to partake of those mysteries, I ought to lay it to heart that what rightly keeps me from the table of the Lord would exclude me from heaven. But if it be my own erring mind; or Satan's temptation, that tells me that I am unworthy to come, let me ask myself, of what blessing am I worthy? And can unworthiness form a valid plea for the neglect of Christ's own, dying command?

With characteristic condescension, the Lord Jesus instituted this sacrament as a help to faith through the medium of sense. It is a standing memorial and proof of the glorious fact, that he died for our sins; it is a constant pledge that the covenant of grace and peace is in full force. I cannot but look upon it as being something more than a commemorative ordinance. It is a covenant rite; a solemn means of grace; consecrated as the symbol of the blessed truths connected with our redemption, and as the seal of

that redemption to every contrite and believing heart. The Saviour's words, "This is the New Testament," or covenant, "in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins," teach that the covenant was ratified in his blood, and that the cup represents the covenant and the means of its establishment. In this sacrament, therefore, our most gracious God engages, as it were, to fulfil all his promises, giving a visible and tangible pledge thereof. And so when it is rightly received, spiritual life is received either in its commencement, or in its subsequent increase and growth.

But let me remember that "all receive not the grace of God which receive the sacraments of his grace." I must discern the Lord's body, and exercise a firm faith in him. I must on my part make it a seal, by renewing my acceptance of redemption through the blood of Jesus, by thus proclaiming this to the world, and by feeding on Christ as the true Passover in my heart by faith with thanksgiving. When Fletcher, smitten by a mortal sickness, approached the communion-table for the last time, he said, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim." In this spirit of reverent faith I would draw nigh; and there, as at the mercy-seat, will God meet with me and bless me.

THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT.—That is a most momentous declaration of the Apostle's, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price." And its truth is not affected by my conduct. I may live to myself: still this cannot invalidate the claims of God and Christ upon me. Whether I am prepared to glorify God in my body and spirit or not, yet are they *His*; and to consecrate them to Him remains my solemn and inevitable duty.

I would then yield myself unto God. And because I have an earthly mind, and a treacherous heart, I wish to do this in such a way as may best serve to impress me, and keep me steadfast. Living in the habitual surrender of myself to God, I find it also useful to do this at proper seasons more formally. I am thus strengthened against temptation, by remembering that at such a time I with all solemnity took the vows of God upon me. It helps to bind my wayward spirit to his service. And it emboldens me to look up to God as now my covenant Friend and Father. Thus Jacob vowed a vow at Bethel; (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21;) and the children of Israel once and again publicly entered into covenant with the Almighty. (Exod. xix. 5—8; Josh. xxiv. 14—25; 2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3, &c.)

Under the sanction of such examples, and in conformity with the opinion of many wise and godly men, it is our custom to meet on the first Sabbath of every year, unitedly and formally to renew our covenant with God. The remembrance of the mercies of our past life crowds upon our minds; and in anticipation of the future, with all its responsibilities, trials, and blessings, and opportunities for serving God, we join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant. That I may bring myself more fully under the influence of so important a service, and engage in it intelligently, I would prepare for it by more special self-examination, prayer, and meditation. And how cheering and humbling to think that while we thus avouch the Lord to be our God, He avouches and takes us to be his people!

MY MINISTERS.—I would regard my Ministers as filling a high and solemn office. They did not, I believe, obtrude themselves into it; but were called of God. They experi-

enced the powerful constraint of the Holy Spirit on their souls, causing them to feel that necessity was laid upon them to preach the Gospel ; and their own convictions were confirmed and ratified by the constituted authorities in our branch of the church of Christ. And the blessing that attends their labours is the seal of their apostleship. They are then God's commissioned ambassadors. And let me remember the words of the Lord Jesus,—“He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me.” I would receive them therefore “in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation.” I would “esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.” When I am in sorrow, perplexity, or trouble of mind, I would go to them, for comfort and direction, frankly confiding in them as true friends, Nor can I doubt that their Master will make their prayers, counsels, and ministrations a blessing to my soul.

As they have sown unto me spiritual things, they shall reap my worldly things. (2 Cor. ix. 11.) I esteem it a privilege to contribute toward their maintenance ; nor would I meanly and wrongly regard such contribution in the light of alms or benefactions ; but rather as being an equitable acknowledgment of their cares and labours for my highest and eternal interests. As little would I forget the duty of prayer for them. They have their trials as men ; and how many additional and deep anxieties as Ministers ! What tremendous responsibilities they sustain. How much grace and holy unction they need to make them ensamples to the flock, and to give success to their efforts to spread the kingdom of the Redeemer ! Often, then, will I plead with God on their behalf, that He would fill their souls with light and peace, and qualify them for their holy work, by

richly enduing them with "power from on high." And I have always found that the more I have remembered them at the throne of grace, the more of spiritual good have I derived through their ministry.

MY CLASS.—I read of some in the ancient church of God who "feared the Lord, and spake often one to another;" and God pronounced a special blessing upon them. Coming to the New Testament, I find it there enjoined, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed;" and the fellowship of believers with each other is represented as one of the choicest privileges of the militant church. Now in my class-meeting I have the opportunity of imitating these saints of past ages, and of performing the duties, and realizing the benefits of the communion of saints. By being thus brought into more intimate intercourse with a little band of Christ's followers, my love to the brethren is increased. Our mutual conversations and prayers are helpful to me in my heavenward journey. I feel that I have friends among the excellent of the earth, who take an affectionate interest in me, and delight to intercede with God for me when I am in special need or trouble. Having thus regularly to disclose my spiritual exercises, a salutary habit of self-inspection and godly jealousy over myself is cherished. What may be peculiar in my case is met in a manner that it scarcely could be in the public ordinances of religion; and often has it refreshed and instructed me to hear the statements of those who know the way of God more perfectly; often, in the midst of sore trial and conflict, have I been comforted and encouraged on finding that "the same afflictions are accomplished in my brethren that are in

the world." As the gifted Richard Watson said, "It is by these blessed institutions, which so constantly respect the end of all preaching, and of all religious profession,—the work of God in the heart,—that the blind are led in the right way; the penitent encouraged to the exercise of that faith in Christ, whereby cometh salvation; the tempted comforted; and all urged forward by the counsels of experience, and the prayers of those who are united in this interesting fellowship, to the mark of the prize of our high calling."

I therefore hail the hour of our meeting, and would go in the spirit of recollection and prayer. I would be as frank and explicit in my statements as possible, guarding against a loose, vague, or stereotyped style of expression. And as my Leader must have much care about us, and greatly needs spiritual wisdom to direct us aright, I will ever remember him in prayer. Thus I hope that these means of grace will be as wells of water by the way-side, and antepasts of the fellowship of heaven.

HOME.—It is God who "setteth the solitary in families;" so that by families, and in all their affairs, He ought to be acknowledged and adored. This then is my resolve,—"I and my house will serve the Lord." I would be the more careful to show "piety at home," as it is here that my example and influence are most powerfully felt. How much of circumspection, thoughtfulness, and prayer will this require; for if there be failings and inconsistencies, they will be sure to be developed here. When Whitefield was asked whether a certain person was a good man, he replied, "I

know not : I never lived with him." O may I have grace to walk within my house with a perfect heart !

As a professed servant of the Lord, I feel that it is my duty to regulate all family affairs, such as style of living, associations, habits, &c., according to the principles of the Bible, rather than those which are current in society at large. I would not seem sanctimonious or unnecessarily singular : at the same time, I must let it be seen that mine is a *Christian* household. John Howard's resolution is mine : "Wherever I have a tent, there God shall have an altar." There will I with my family, offer morning and evening worship to our Father in heaven. His precious word shall be read. Praise shall be presented to him for bestowing and continuing life, health, reason, domestic comfort, and mutual love ; and most of all for "the unspeakable gift." And earnest supplication shall ascend, that ours may be "the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush." I would be scrupulously careful in reference to the observance of the Sabbath in my family ; not, however, making it a day of austerity and gloom, but one of quiet, of hallowed cheerfulness, of sacred duties and pleasures.

I would acknowledge God in the training and government of my children. While I feel bound to give them as good an education as possible, I would in this be especially careful of their moral and religious training. And when they are to be settled in life, I would not sacrifice their spiritual interests to the prospect of worldly wealth and honour. With all tenderness and fidelity, I would press on them the momentous truths connected with their salvation, "allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way." I know that in this

respect, my responsibility is great. But God's covenant is ordered in all things and sure ; His promise cannot fail : and while I look to him for his blessing, I would solemnly resolve to do my part. So earnest and faithful would I be with each one of my offspring that I may be able to adopt the language addressed by Bolton to his children, when on his death-bed, "I think verily none of you dare think to meet me at the great tribunal in an unregenerate condition."

Thus would I seek to make mine a happy home. Over all its concerns the spirit of religion shall preside ; and kindness, love, and joy shall circulate around our hearth. And then,

"When soon or late we reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven ;
May we rejoice, no wanderer lost,
A family in heaven."

MY MASTER.—I would "count my master worthy of all honour." He is placed by the providential appointment or God above me ; so that I ought to avoid everything rude in my carriage, or contemptuous in my speech, towards him. If he be, like myself, a professor of religion, I would respect him the more, according to the Apostle's admonition, (1 Tim. vi. 2.) All his commands, where they are not at variance with God's, shall be obeyed : and this whether his eye be upon me or not ; without grudging, or murmuring, but "heartily and with good-will, as to the Lord." I would be scrupulously honest and faithful in all that is committed to my trust ; and no more waste his goods than I would my own ; "not purloining, but showing all good fidelity." I

would guard myself against injuring him in reputation or any other thing by the idle habit of gossiping and tale-bearing.

And let me not repine because I have to occupy myself in what may seem low and menial affairs. The Apostle teaches us, (Eph. vi. 5-8 ; Col. iii. 22-24,) that if these duties be discharged in a religious spirit, they shall all be accepted by God as service done to him ; so that, while I am about my daily avocations, if my eye and heart be fixed on Him, I am as truly serving and glorifying Him as the Christian Minister in his more strictly spiritual labours. And blessed be God it is permitted me in my station to advance the cause of Christ. The little captive maid instrumentally brought about Naaman's cure and conversion ; and so may I, by a meek, consistent, and godly deportment, recommend my Saviour's service, and adorn His doctrine.

MY SERVANT.—In selecting those whom I am to employ, especially if under my roof, I would prefer such as are of the household of faith. For the sake of my children, I would seek for godly domestics. "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me ; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." (Psalm ci. 6.) A just and equitable remuneration shall be given by me for all the labour thus rendered ; for it is a most odious and iniquitous thing to oppress the hireling in his wages. While maintaining the proper authority with which God in his providence has entrusted me, I would at the same time guard against all harshness and superciliousness. It would be most unworthy conduct to treat one who is immortal and redeemed like myself, in a haughty, or passionate, or incon-

siderate manner. It would be offensive to Him who is my Master in heaven. It would effectually prevent the success of my attempts to promote the spiritual interests of such as are dependent on me. For I would not forget that such efforts are my incumbent duty. I ought to do all in my power to induce them to take the yoke of Christ upon them. Let me then recommend it to them by kind and earnest words ; and most of all by a blameless and holy example. Let me be careful that domestic concerns shall be so arranged as to allow time for private reading and prayer, and for attending the public means of grace. Thus, like Abraham, would I "command my children and my household after me, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

MY COUNTRY.—Though the Lord Jesus came to be the Saviour of the whole human family, he yet indulged the feelings of friendship, and cherished a peculiar regard for "his own nation." Nor is there aught so monstrous in his religion as to demand the sacrifice of the special attachments of home, kindred, country. While therefore I would breathe nothing but good-will towards mankind at large, my heart still clings to my native land. "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces!" I would reverence and obey the powers that be, "rendering to all their dues ; tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear : honour to whom honour." I would look fairly and candidly at the measures which the constitutional government may adopt, carefully avoiding a captious partisanship. In the exercise of the prerogatives which are mine as a citizen of the state, such as the elective franchise, &c.,

let me seek to make it evident that I am influenced more by the spirit of religion, than by any merely wordly or political consideration ; well satisfied that " righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." I would remember the duty of praying for Kings, and for all that are in authority. And as I believe that we are a guilty nation, I would, like Daniel, the patriot Prophet, humble myself before the Lord. Because of prevalling wordliness, Sabbath-breaking, national pride, and faithlessness to our character as a Protestant nation, God may be justly angry with us. I will then plead with Him to turn away his wrath ; to diffuse his truth and righteousness throughout the land ; to dispose those in high places to own the claims of his truth and cause ; and thus to give us the happiness of the people whose God is the Lord.

GIVING.—I wish ever to remember that whatever amount of worldly good I possess, be it less or more, I have been entrusted with it by God, and am to employ it in subordination to him. I am not its independent proprietor, but a steward, accountable for the manner in which it is expended and used. Now it is plainly God's will, as revealed in his word, that some portion of our property should be employed in ministering to the temporal and spiritual wants of our fellow-creatures. His human family. As, then, I have " received of the Lord," so would I minister the same, as a good steward of God's manifold grace." I would not do this casually and from mere impulse ; but on a system, thoughtfully, prayerfully and conscientiously adopted. Thus it was enjoined the children of Israel that " every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy

which he hath given thee." And the holy Apostle commands, "Let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him:" by which he urges, as Paley has justly observed, "the being charitable upon a plan."

"And in determining what *proportion* of my income shall be set apart to God and his cause, I will endeavour to call into exercise the grace of self-denial. Shall I "offer of that which doth cost me nothing," to Him who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich?" Considering how many claims on the liberality of Christians there are, I would exercise a proper discrimination, selecting from among the excellent enterprises of the Christian church, such as are in the most urgent need, and as accomplish the highest and noblest good. The temporal distresses of those around me are to be relieved; and, chief of all, aid must be given to the efforts made to evangelize my country and the world. And to be permitted to do this, praise shall be given to God's glorious name. "Who am I, that I should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?" Freely I have received; freely will I give. These contributions are not a burden nor a tax. Neither are they given with the foolish and unscriptural idea of purchasing God's favour, or meriting heaven. They are but small and most inadequate expressions of my infinite obligations to that blessed Saviour who gave HIMSELF for me.

SORROW, SICKNESS, AND DEATH.—Adversity, in one form or other, is necessary for the purposes of moral discipline. What is noble and exalted in character can never otherwise be developed, the injurious influence of the world counter-

acted, nor the fruits of righteousness matured. It is on this account, that God, as a wise and gracious Father, chastises those whom he loves. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth," or pruneth, "it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

But I have no right to bring trouble on myself by my own misconduct or fanaticism. God only has a perfect knowledge of my character; so that he alone knows how far, and in what manner, it is proper for me to be tried. The misguided Romanist may impose self-inflicted penances, or perversely refuse to take the blessings and comforts of this life which God's tender care provides; but can this be well-pleasing to God? Can it give increased sanctity? Is it not virtually questioning the wisdom of the appointments of an all-wise Providence? "Who hath required this at your hands?" And further, I may do what lies in my power to alleviate or to remove the burden of distress. Thus, by provident management and foresight, I ought to strive to prevent future pecuniary embarrassment. And it is my duty to be most careful of the preservation of my health and life. Habits which inevitably engender disease, or the neglect of it when it befalls me, would be sins against myself, my family, and my Maker.

Still as I must have tribulation in the world, I will endeavour to fortify my mind against it, and anxiously seek to derive the spiritual profit which it is intended to impart. The wisest of men exhorts, "In the day of adversity consider." I would consider what is the design of God in appointing it; especially searching into the defects of my character and Christian experience, all which may, by these

sorrows and trials, be remedied. The sick chamber, or the house of mourning, is the place to cultivate self-acquaintance, to humble the heart before God, and to get solemn and affecting views of the "things eternal and unseen." And if I neither despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when rebuked of him, I know he will sustain, comfort, and bless me. Even in these dark days, I find much to console me. Never is God's blessed book dearer. The sympathy, visits, counsels, and prayers of pious friends and my Pastor all cheer me. And, best of all, the Son of Man is graciously present with me in the furnace.

Then I would remember that the close of this life of mingled joy and sorrow is hastening; and it would betray criminal weakness or carelessness not to look forward to it, and to arrange my temporal concerns in reference to it. I would seek for the wisest and holiest of my friends, to be the guardians of my children when I am gone; and if I have any property to leave behind, I would give the most explicit and equitable directions about it, so that there might be no heart-burnings or jealousies among those connected with me.

I know that by far the best consolation to survivors, and the most satisfactory evidence of final safety, are found in a life spent in walking with God and doing his will; and I am chiefly solicitous that such should be my case. Still, if it be the will of my heavenly Father, I should be thankful to be delivered from sudden death. I would fain review my life, compose my spirit, and repair more earnestly than ever to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, before entering on the invisible and eternal world. It would give me sweet peace and satisfaction then, once more, to partake

of the memorials of my Saviour's death and passion,—not that I superstitiously think of it as a charm to make me sure of heaven ;—but I would again hold communion with Him and his followers in this blessed sacrament, and in life's latest hour show forth the Lord's death by which I hope to rise to the life immortal. And I should deem it a privilege to be able then to give some words of counsel and consolation to those whom I have loved, and whom I must leave to join the family above. This, therefore, is my prayer :—

“ So when thou sendest, Lord for me,
 O let the messenger be love !
 Whisper thy love into my heart,
 Warn me of my approaching end !
 And then I joyfully depart,
 And then I to thy arms ascend.”

J. H.

